

Beware of green prophets

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

July 7, 2017 Friday

All but Toronto Edition

Copyright 2017 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: FP COMMENT; Pg. FP7

Length: 769 words

Byline: Matthew Lau, National Post

Body

H.L. Mencken famously observed that "the urge to save humanity is almost always a false front for the urge to rule." So Canadians should have sat up with alarm - for both their wallets and their freedom - after hearing Catherine McKenna, the federal minister of environment and climate change, declare on Twitter recently that after meeting Pope Francis, they had "agreed to work together to save our (planet)" (she actually used an emoji of the Earth).

It is, of course, our money that she will be using for her green-spirited crusade, our lives that she wants to re-organize, and our minds she wants to re-educate. Her plan to make us all believe in climate religion as faithfully as she does was made plain by her recent endorsement of a campaign that invites churches to make climate activism the focus of their sermons, prayers, hymns, and Bible studies.

McKenna clearly imagines herself Canada's climate saviour. But she has competition: Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne's messianic zeal in leading her provincial flock to a carbonless New Jerusalem may well exceed even McKenna's call to turn churches into climate shrines. Not satisfied with requiring Ontarians to dig deep into their paycheques in the name of spreading green power, the Wynne government is now accepting applications for a new "Low-Carbon Grant."

David Suzuki wannabes, Al Gore disciples, and leftwing social engineers are invited to apply to receive up to \$200,000 to support ideas to "accelerate the adoption of low-carbon choices." Specifically, the grants will be given to those who can "help Ontarians understand how their actions contribute to climate change; identify and remove barriers to behaviour change; motivate Ontarians to make low-carbon choices; and evaluate behaviour-based approaches to achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions." One project example provided by the government was offering "interactive theatre productions and workshops across the country to engage young people in climate change at an early age and influence habits."

Such is the mindset of Liberal politicians today: To them, the ordinary Canadian is just too ignorant to know how much climate damage he's causing, or too selfish to make the sacrifices to stop. Hence the need for the enlightened Liberals to save the world by re-educating us all about our energy-usage responsibilities, especially at an early age.

This arrogance is astounding, given that it would be difficult to find anyone anywhere with a worse record of irresponsibility and recklessness on energy than Wynne's Liberals. The provincial auditor general's 2015 report found that Ontarians were charged an extra \$37 billion for energy from 2006 to 2014, and the excess costs from 2015 to 2032 are estimated at another \$133 billion.

With electricity rates so high that they're driving up demand for food banks, as people choose between energy and groceries, the Liberals announced earlier this year that they would give ratepayers a short-term \$24-billion break on

Beware of green prophets

electricity rates. Alas, deferring those costs will eventually result in Ontarians paying an additional \$45 billion to \$93 billion.

And a recent study from the Montreal Economic Institute found that Ontario's rich subsidies for Teslas and other electric cars is costing taxpayers exorbitantly: with its rebate on electric vehicles, "the Ontario government is paying 29 times more than the carbon market price per tonne of GHGs eliminated."

Mark Milke, who co-authored the study, noted that the "real costs are probably even higher, since half of buyers of electric vehicles would make their purchases even without the subsidy. Those subsidies are therefore a pure loss."

So if anybody needs reeducation on energy issues, environmental economics, financial literacy, good decision-making, or basic math, it's the Ontario Liberals.

The federal Liberals have their own energy and environmental policy bumbles, though nothing quite as bad as Ontario's - yet. A recent news release from Environment and Climate Change Canada, for instance, highlights the market-friendliness of the new federal carbon tax, because it supposedly gives people "the flexibility to choose solutions that enable them to pollute less." But it then goes on to boast about government-mandated spending and regulatory decisions that defy the very logic behind carbon taxes and distort the carbon-use decisions people would otherwise make.

If these are the people taxing, regulating, and reeducating us towards climate salvation, surely we would be better left unsaved.

Matthew Lau is a Toronto writer !@COPYRIGHT=© 2017 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Graphic

/ Catherine McKenna;

Load-Date: July 7, 2017